

AMERICAN REALISM TODAY

SEPTEMBER 16, 2022 - JANUARY 1, 2023

William and Bette Batchelor Gallery, Alix W. Stanley Gallery,
and P.B. Stanley Gallery



Tim Hoffman, *Home By The Sea*, 2021, Oil on canvas, 66 x 96 inches

Capturing scenes of the landscape and everyday life, *American Realism Today* celebrates the rich tradition of Realist art in America while reflecting the innovative spirit of our contemporary times. The exhibition encompasses more than 50 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, by a network of over 20 artists working across generations, including Robert Lobe, Kathleen Gilje, Joseph McNamara, James Prosek, Faith Ringgold, and many others.

American Realism Today is curated by acclaimed artist Neil Jenney (b. 1945, Torrington, CT), who is known for his unique and influential brand of Realist painting, steeped in the landscape, people, and pastimes of America. The subject of a retrospective exhibition at the NBMAA in 2018, Jenney now returns to the Museum as artist-curator, presenting the first survey of contemporary American Realism made by the current New York scene in over half a century.

**NEW BRITAIN
MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN ART**

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NEIL JENNEY:

The most important figure in post-WW2 contemporary American realism was a man named Ivan Karp (1926-2012). When Norman Mailer decided to create a weekly newspaper in 1955 in NYC called the Village Voice, his choice for its art critic was Ivan Karp. And when Leo Castelli opened a gallery off Madison Avenue at East 77th Street, he chose Ivan Karp as his top lieutenant and guiding force. Karp proceeded to organize a stable of little-known talents such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenburg, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol.*

Karp explained their productions to the world as “The Popular Movement.” This unifying term was his alone. It gave context to the then dominating and opposing force of Abstract Expressionism. He offered a thoughtful validity to its being. This logic impressed the few active but timid collectors of Abstract Expressionism to embrace the possibility of taking a chance on this “Popular Stuff.” A courageous and confident collector and NYC taxi cab magnet named Robert Scull realized that Karp was right in his



Kathleen Gilje, *Mona Lisa, L.H.O.O.Q., Restored*, 2015 Oil on canvas, 40 7/8 H X 31 3/8 inches

thinking and jumped in wholeheartedly, as did the architect Phillip Johnson, who proceeded to purchase and then donate Andrew Warhol's possibly greatest work, *The Gold Marilyn Monroe*, to The Museum of Modern Art. The dispersal, at auction, of the Scull collection in 1973 was a most pivotal event, as it was purchased by West German Collectors. This international approval and transaction immediately validated “Pop Art” as the real thing and proved contemporary American realism was a wise investment.

In 1969 Karp decided to leave Castelli and set off on his own downtown—a radical move at the time—and called his gallery the O.K. Harris Gallery after his first storefront gallery, which opened in the summer of 1963 at Provincetown, Massachusetts. (The storefront came with a sign that said “O.K. Harris”). The O.K. Harris Gallery found its permanent location on the first floor at 383 West Broadway. This space was a “Block Through” with four separate addresses, 69-71 Wooster Street and 383-385 West Broadway. 200 feet long by 55 feet wide, equaling 11,000 square feet, it was the largest art gallery of the 20th century. To fill such a space required four separate shows every month. Karp still holds the world record for most shows ever given at a single location. Ivan Karp died in 2012, and the gallery closed in 2014. Some of his biggest stars moved to the 4th floor of 383 West Broadway and showed at the West Broadway Gallery until it closed in 2020.

Ivan Karp's legacy reaches down to this exhibition through the inclusion of artists he discovered or that were part of the extended network of artists affiliated with the West Broadway Gallery.

*Born Andrew Warhola Jr., the artist changed his name to Andy Warhol in 1949, upon moving to New York.

Participating Artists:

Leonard Dufresne	Tom Otterness
Bernard Edwards	James Prosek
Kathleen Gilje	Faith Ringgold
Tim Hoffman	Sally Ross
Neil Jenney	Ki-young Sung
Larry Kagan	Alison Elizabeth
David Kessler	Taylor
Justen Ladda	Mercer Tullis
Victor Leger	Yoichiro Yoda
Robert Lobe	Charles Yoder
Joseph McNamara	